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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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~ Laptop Sales Increase ~ People Are Talking! ~ Windows XP Today!
~ New Judge In MS Case! ~ SpamCon Foundation! ~ ZIP Drive Revival?

~ JagFest 2K1 Report! ~ ScottFree Ported! ~ GameCube Delayed!
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-* Tax Ban Extension Is Backed! *-
-* AOL Distrusted More Than Microsoft! *-
-* Computer Games Cause Brain Damage In Kids? *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

I remembered less than five minutes after I sent the issue out to our online distribution list! Talk about looking foolish. Talk about looking STUPID! My online mailbox filled up within hours - where were my comments that I had mentioned would be added to Joe's column last week? In the famous words of that famous cartoon goofball, Homer Simpson: "D'OH!!!"

I have to admit, I laughed so hard while reading Joe's commentary about "stupid people" that I thought I was going to have some sort of bodily accident! And what's worse, I agree with him for the most part! The world would be a much better place without "stupid" people! Now, before anyone goes off on either one of us for such "inappropriate" labeling of "mentally-challenged" people - that's not who either of us are talking about. We're referring to people who appear to have "at least normal" intelligence, but don't have an inkling how to display it. Personally, I refer to this problem as those people who don't seem to have any common sense. These are people who try to act or talk intelligently but end up looking/sounding like a buffoon. You've all seen them - they're everywhere!

I remember once in my early college days, a bunch of us had just come out of a Baskin-Robbins ice cream store on a warm spring day. We all had purchased an ice cream cone. A couple, obviously from Harvard or MIT, from their appearance (we were in Harvard Square), saw us and stopped. One of them, I can't remember which, asked: "Hey, is that an ice cream cone you're eating?" One of my friends, dumbfounded at the stupidity of the obvious, nonchalantly replied "No, it's a frozen turd with ants sprinkled on it, in a cone!" (chocolate ice cream with chocolate 'jimmies' or sprinkles on top!) and walked away. Okay, a little crass, but they deserved it. No common sense whatsoever. I'm sure you've all observed some type of behavior that was just as stupid, and wondered why these people aren't put away somewhere on an island as far away from the civilized world as possible.

So yes, I can identify with Joe's comments last week. And just to keep this editorial in context of an Atari-related magazine - how about the person who approaches you as you're sitting in front of your MegaST, working with your program of choice, and they remark: "That can't be a computer, Atari only made games!" Probably a future politician!

Anyway, it's vacation time again - and Joe is undoubtedly giving me an evil

look at the moment, or worse! The summer is winding down - I can't believe it's the end of August already! Time to finish some projects, and do a lot of relaxing. Get up to see my father and see how he's doing. Get in some "last-of-the-summer" barbecues. Whatever. It will be fun. Then it's Labor Day and everything starts to pick up again. Enjoy it while you can!

Until next time...

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Updates from Rodolphe CZUBA

Several new pictures and CAD files are available at
www.czuba-tech.com

Included in the updates:

The 060 and the Falcon Bus connector are now entered in the library of the CAD software (Eagle).

- Blocks Diagram of the Falcon Complete Architecture (12/92) : F30_Archi.jpg (93KB)

- Settings of the 16 Jumpers (solders) of the Falcon (02/96) : F30_Jumpers.jpg (40KB)

- Falcon Bus Connector Pinout (02/96) : F30_Bus_Pinout.jpg (44KB)

- Falcon Bus Connector Dimensions (03/96) : F30_Bus_PCB.jpg (15KB)

- Schematics of the 'LINE' modifications of the Falcon AUDIO circuit (06/96) : F30_Audio.jpg (103KB)

PDA Maze for Atari ST Updated!

A new version of the Atari ST version of PDA Maze is available at
http://www.netset.com/~baldrick/pdamaze.html

New changes include:

Redraw problems patched

Iconfication support in place

GEM Menu bar added

Maze size can be changed via the "Maze Options" dialog found from the Menu bar.

C Source code is included in the archive

PDA Maze is a port of an XWindows program for the Linux Agenda PDA,

original version from New Breed Software

Ultimate Virus Killer 2000 for Atari ST/TT/Falcon

The "Ultimate Virus Killer 2000" is the industry standard virus killer for the Atari ST/TT/Falcon platform. The program has been around for well over a decade, and with the latest release (8.1) it’s turned shareware.

There is now an official "UVK 2000" support site where you can download the program, find descriptions of all Atari TOS-platform computer viruses (and their symptoms) and more.

It’s located at http://www.uvk2000.com.

ScottFree v. 1.14 Released for Atari

Mathias Jaap (of http://www.atariuptodate.de/) has ported ScottFree to atari TOS machines.

ScottFree reads and executes TRS80 format Scott Adams datafiles. Scott Adams wrote a couple of adventures in the 70’s and early 80’s. These adventures were released a while ago as shareware by Scott.

URL: http://mypenguin.de/prg/

MyMail 1.50 Released

a new version of MyMail is available at
http://www2.tripnet.se/~erikhall/programs/mymail.html

For changes, read the MyMail history text.

Jagulator v1.5.1 Released

Saturday 18th August 2001

Here we go, as promised I have released version 1.5.1 of Jagulator today with much improved speed and compatibility. This release is different from future releases in that it will only run a specific list of roms (see the compatibility page for what can be loaded and run). The emulator will refuse to load any but the listed roms. The reason for this approach with this release is that I see this release as a demonstrator to show that Jaguar emulation is progressing well. Also, due to the code still being in high development I did not want to compromise stability for flexibility. Please note that this ONLY affects this version of Jagulator, 1.5.1, and all future versions will be more flexible allowing any rom image to be loaded.

Download from the Jagulator site www.jagulator.com

MJM v 0.1.63 Released

Marijuana Mail is a simple e-mail client for Atari ST/STe computers. It works on a standard 1040 ST with 1 MB RAM - no hard disk, no N.AES, no MiNT, no MagiC, no AV_SERVER is needed! It contains built-in viewer and editor, supports MIME standard, decodes Base64 attachments, allows you to easily sort the messages according to date, subject or sender field and to create up to nine user profiles, each with a separate address book. It also provides a comfortable real-time slider for NVDI users. Needs STinG or STiK2 to handle network connection. This is an incomplete BETA version.

Changes:

Support for servers where login name is different from user name.
Updated Look of the user interface.
Several bugs were fixed

URL: http://strony.poland.com/at4ri/mjm-eng.htm

CT60 : First Schematics !

I put the first picture of the first schematics of the CT60 on my web site!

Regards

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING

compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, unlike last week, I don’t have anything annoying, irritating, or obtuse to say.... mark it down on the calendar. <grin>

To tell you the truth, I had expected more of a response about last week’s column. I had envisioned legions of stupid people... oh, excuse

me, the politically correct term is Intellectually Challenged... writing to me to complain that they were being unfairly characterized.

The only response I got was an old friend who said that he had never thought of the intellectually challenged as a minority because there were just so many of them. I'm afraid that I have to agree. Of course, none of US fit into that category.

I hope that Dana includes whatever comments he had last week on the subject in this week's issue.

I'm even considering a new poll on AtariNews.Org... "What's Your Favorite Stupid Quote". It's not strictly Atari-related, but it may help some of us vent a little.

Well, let's get on with the news and stuff from the UseNet...

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

'Phantomm' asks about DTP options for his Falcon:

"I'm looking for a good DTP package to use on a Falcon.
I have PageStream that I've used for years but now I'm looking for a DTP program that will allow 256 Colors or even TC on screen and supports some of the latest InkJet and Laser Printers. Good Color and GreyScale print outs is a must. Also some type of Scanner support would be nice.

It will be used mostly for News Letters.

I also have a older version of Calamus, but haven't gotten into it.

Are there any DTP packages that are still being supported and updated?

Any lists of DTP packages with the latest version would be appreciated."

James Alexander tells Phantomm:

"There is a new "lite" version of calamus SL but my experiences as I remember calamus was strictly a monochrome only although it was supposed to support colour output to printers. The major problem I had (and it was major) was that the program used to generate printer drivers was an early beta (ie. should have still been an alpha) version that was very buggy. it didn't support many printers past 1995 (none of which are still available anywhere where I live) and it tended to generate buggy drivers that had trouble handling the correct page length. I abandoned calamus because of this and bought the much cheaper and easier to use pagestream.

While not marketed strictly as DTP, Papyrus in its current job may fit the bill. Some local users have it and it works quite well. It can do reasonably good page layout, multiple fonts, imported images. It can even produce html files as output."

Mike Kerslake adds:

"If you have ever seen copies of Atari Computing magazine then you'll see what is possible with Papyrus/NVDI. I did all the magazine using

Papyrus v4 (apart from some advert pages) and it is well up to the job. Colour output is quite possible as well."

Bob King adds his thoughts to the mix:

"In my humble opinion, there is sadly no DTP package for the Atari platform that is capable of producing good color output from any modern printer. When I used B/W, DA's Layout was good enough, but the acquisition of an Epson 850c, arguably the best, supported color printer for the Atari, showed that ALL the top DTP packages are incapable with or without the aid of error diffusion like aids or NVDI of producing anything but crude colour prints, not in the same league as the 'photo' like printouts from the PC and Mac machines. The Atari platform was long ago abandoned by all the major print driver producers. I have been forced to change platform to the Mac to get even semi-commercial quality colour printing, and that change was from a Milan. Sad fact but true."

Ken Springer tells Bob:

"Have you checked in the Calamus forum as to what's currently available in the way of printer drivers? There is a VDI driver for the Atari version that accesses any printer driver available in NVDI. That leaves the responsibility for the new printer drivers up to NVDI. NVDI 4 would let you create your own printer driver, but this feature went away in NVDI 5. I heard it was some sort of flap with printer mfgrs. not wanting their printer codes out in public or something. Tis sad you now have to pay an arm and a leg for information that used to be provided for free, i.e. the printer's programming codes.

AFAIK, drivers for Atari software have always been written by Atari software programmers, not the printer mfgrs., probably due to lack of sales of this platform.

In the Windows version, you use the Windows printer drivers, so no dedicated Atari drivers are needed. I suspect the same is true under MagicMac.

The printer driver question for the native Atari version would be a good question for the Calamus forum."

Phantomm now asks about GDPS scanner support:

"Maybe someone can enlighten me on the GDPS Scanner software?

I have several programs that have scanner support. Some use modules and some state that a GDPS Scanner Driver/program is not installed.

What exactly is the GDPS and where can I find more info on it and the software?"

James Alexander asks Phantomm:

"Have you tried the Scan maker software from Homa systems House?

Sorry I forgot the new website but its pretty good and I think it supports gdps (although I've never used that feature myself)."

Ken Springer jumps in and tells Phantomm:

"AFAIK, GDPS is just a standard for writing software that allows any

program to talk to any piece of hardware. It functions the same way TWAIN software functions in the Windoze world. You write the ability to use a GDPS device into your application software, and the ability to be accessed as a GDPS device into the software peripheral. So, in the case of your scanner question, any piece of software that is written to be GDPS compliant can use any scanner that has software that is GDPS compliant.

I have a copy of the scanner software for HP scanners. It is GDPS compliant. It is installed as an ACC, so it shows up in the accessory menu and works fine from there. However, if you are in Photoline, for example, and you click on GDPS scanner the same software is displayed. When you scan your photo, the scanned image opens into a new window in Photoline.

There used to be a public domain GDPS scanner driver for Epson scanners. I don't know what happened to it. I tried it years ago and personally found it to be buggy. It could be quite different now.

As near as I can tell, GDPS stuff never made much impact here in the US. For that matter, neither did the Atari. :-(But it's my impression that GDPS support was quite popular in Europe."

Phil Smith asks about swapping TOS chips:

"I have two 1040STs with built-in floppies. One is flaky, doesn't run very well but has TOS 1.4, the other one works fine but has TOS 1.0. Assuming both TOSes are on 6 chips, can I just swap the chipsets to upgrade the good ST?

Hopefully, the first machine's problems aren't being caused by bad ROM chips."

Edward Baiz tells Phil:

"That should work as long as you put the chips in the correct order. If you have TOS 1.0 on disk, run it on the bad ST and see what happens."

An old-time luminary in the Atari world... and always one of my favorites... Bob Retelle tells Phil:

"It sounds like you haven't had the machines open yet, is that right?

If so, it may be possible that the "flaky" machine is simply suffering from "chip creep", a malady that seemed to befall most STs at one time or another.

The problem is that having the keyboard mounted directly over the computer's motherboard will, over time, subject the motherboard to flexing and twisting, as you pound on the keyboard.

(This doesn't affect the models with separate keyboards, like Megas and of course PC compatibles.)

What happens is that over time the chips on the motherboard which are not soldered down will start to "creep" up out of their sockets.

Eventually the contact between the legs of the chips and the contact points in the socket become intermittent which can cause ALL kinds of problems, including problems with the floppy drives.

If this is the cause of the problems in your ST, it may be possible for you to fix it very easily.

All you have to do is to open the plastic case by removing the screws in the bottom, then remove keyboard by gently unplugging its cable from the motherboard.

The most difficult part of this "fix" usually is removing the metal RF shield under the keyboard. Some of the early STs had little tabs which could be easily untwisted with a needle nosed pliers, but later ones were soldered to keep users hands out of the machines.

If yours is soldered, you can use a sharp wire cutter to cut the tabs off, or best solution of all is to unsolder the tabs.

Once you have the metal cover off the motherboard, locate all the large chips which are inserted in sockets.

Gently, but firmly, press all the chips down into their sockets with your thumbs.

You should hear a definite "crunch" sound as the chips reseat.

The big M68000 CPU chip is usually soldered in place, but the TOS ROMS should be reseated (these can cause REAL problems if they've started to creep), the MMU chip (in a four-sided socket), and anything else in a socket should all be pressed back down. There's a video shifter chip usually under a metal cover in a small metal RF shield that's usually socketed too.

Reassemble the RF shield, plug in the keyboard and put the case back together, then flame on and see if reseating the chips has fixed anything.

My original 520ST had so many problems with the chips (er, especially after I'd added memory upgrades) that I just left the case loose so I could reseat the chips any time things got a little flaky.

It's worth a shot, and won't cost anything to try."

Phil tells Bob:

"Thanks for the tips, but yes, I have opened both machines and reseated everything. I think the problem lies within the memory upgrade in the flaky machine. Its been expanded to 4megs (it was already expanded when I bought it off ebay) and I always have to reseat the ram board and lots of times that doesn't fix it. I also frequently get orange dots randomly appearing on the screen which is a warning of impending doom. Kind of nice because it does give me just enough time to save stuff before it bombs.

Most games refuse to work with it as well. May just be incompatibilities with TOS 1.4. I use a 520ST for games."

Bob tells Phil:

"Yup, the orange dots on the screen indicate it's a memory problem.

Unfortunately the memory upgrades for the various ST models were all

such kludges that problems like this are an accepted part of living with an upgraded ST.

The first one I installed came with waxed string to be used to TIE the upgrade connectors down on top of data buffer chips on the motherboard (and pray it would keep them connected), Chewing gum probably would have been more effective. In fact, many upgrades actually included strips of "double sided foam sticky tape" to hold things together.

A few of the early ones actually came with tiny "alligator clips" to connect the memory board to the chips on the motherboard. Sneeze anywhere in the room and they'd all pop off.

I didn't get an upgrade that was anywhere near stable until I got one that had a small "daughterboard" that soldered onto the bottom of the MMU chip socket, on the reverse side of the motherboard.

After that my system was mostly stable... mostly.

Sounds like you're on the right track after all. Swapping the TOS chips into the other machine may be the best answer, unless you can figure out a fix for that 4Meg upgrade."

Well folks, that's it for this time around. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - GameCube Delayed Two Weeks!
Video Games Cause Brain Damage!?
Galleon! PRZYM Chapter 1!
And much much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Nintendo to Delay GameCube, Keep Targets

Japan's Nintendo Co. Ltd. said on Thursday it will delay the U.S. debut of its GameCube console by almost two weeks, but the delay would increase the number of available consoles at launch. The world's second-largest home video-game maker stuck to its target of shipping by March 31 four million units of the machine it hopes will be its new flagship product.

The delay in the U.S. launch to Nov. 18 from Nov. 5 means the new console will appear in stores after the rival XBox, due on Nov. 8 from Microsoft Corp., but will have no negative impact on sales and was simply to prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday at the end of November, said George Harrison, senior vice president of marketing and corporate communications for Nintendo of America Inc.

‘‘We looked at the available quantity that we had, and we felt that it’s more important to have sufficient quantity for Thanksgiving weekend and we thought that was a better day to go on sale," he told Reuters.

The later debut will allow Nintendo to increase the available consoles by 25 percent, to 700,000 units, Peter Main, Nintendo of America’s executive vice president for sales and marketing, said on a conference call.

He said having the extra consoles available was crucial, alluding to the problems that Sony Corp. had last year with its PlayStation 2. Sony repeatedly scaled back the initial shipments of its PlayStation 2 last year, which led to a major shortfall in availability before the holidays.

‘‘It’s really not a surprise to us; this ends up being a really hard business to predict," said James Bernard, a Microsoft spokesman.

‘‘Basically, we’re not concerning ourselves with their launch date," he said, saying that they are targeting different demographic markets.

The GameCube will compete head-to-head for sales with the PS2, which launched in the U.S. in Nov. 2000, and XBox.

A recent study by the Ziff Davis Media Game Group indicated that of gamers who planned to buy a new console this holiday season, 62 percent said they wanted a PS2, 34 percent want an XBox and 33 percent want the GameCube.

PS2 and XBox boast advanced 128-bit processors like the GameCube, but offer superior graphics, audio and memory capacity. GameCube will retail for $199, while both XBox and PS2 sell for $299. GameCube games will sell for $49. The delayed ship date, ‘‘really doesn’t mean anything," said Mike Wallace, an analyst at UBS Warburg, in an interview. ‘‘The initial ship is before Thanksgiving, that’s all that really matters."

Wallace thought there were three reasons for the delay: higher-than-expected demand in Japan, a desire to put more units on shelves in the United States and also a desire not to compete on the same day with XBox.

Of the 700,000 units that will be available at launch in North America, over 90 percent will be offered in the United States, Main said.

A total of seven or eight titles are expected at launch, three from Nintendo and four or five from third parties. By Dec. 31 as many as 20 titles may be on the market.

Main said that Nintendo does not plan on offering packages of games and the console sold together. Microsoft is reported to be actively engaging in the practice, known as bundling, with its retailers.

‘‘Bundling is not part of our program, somebody else thought of that and we wish them well with it," he said.

Regardless of the launch plans, though, analysts believe that the GameCube will be a hot seller this season.

‘‘Even if it comes out on Dec. 24, they’ll still sell 1.1 million units on Dec. 24," said Heath Terry, an analyst at Credit Suisse First Boston.

Terry added that the delay would have minimal, if any, impact on domestic third-party publishers that are producing games for the GameCube.

Nintendo plans to launch the GameCube in Japan on September 14, when it will ship 500,000 of the machines, executive vice president Atsushi Asada said on a call for Japanese media yesterday.

‘‘If Nintendo can assure (the market) they will not have any hardware shortage problems, it will clear one of the negative factors that prompted the recent sell-off in its shares," said Eiji Maeda, senior analyst at Daiwa Institute of Research.

Hiroshi Imanishi, a director at Nintendo, told Reuters on Thursday that the company would draw up a plan by the year’s end for an increase in production of the GameCube. Monthly output of the GameCube is currently 600,000 units.

‘‘We would like to raise monthly production to one million units as soon as possible," he said.

Shares in Nintendo, which generates 70 percent of its sales overseas, have plunged 11 percent so far this month, hit by the yen’s steep appreciation against the dollar.

Nintendo may also be bolstered by what it perceives as a competitive advantage in Japan this holiday season. On the U.S. media call this morning, Nintendo director and general manager for corporate planning Satoru Iwada said he does not think Microsoft will launch the XBox in Japan this year.

‘‘It’s almost impossible to launch (XBox) in Japan, I think," he said.

Microsoft plans to announce its Japanese ship date in Tokyo on August 27. Microsoft’s Bernard declined to comment on Nintendo’s prediction.

Infogrames, Inc. Unleashes ’World of Outlaws Sprint Cars 2002’ For PlayStation2 Computer Entertainment System

First-Ever Dedicated Console Sprint Car Racing Game Features Real Drivers, Tracks, Single and Multi-Player Game Modes

Unleashing the rocket-like power of Sprint Cars onto the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system, Infogrames, Inc.announces the release of World of Outlaws Sprint Cars 2002 for fall. World of Outlaws Sprint Cars 2002 features 12 real world tracks, 24 official World of Outlaws drivers, and ultra-realistic handling physics and graphics powered by Ratbag’s critically acclaimed Difference Engine.

‘‘Sprint car racing is the fastest growing motor sport in America, and

we’re proud to partner with its leading racing series, World of Outlaws, in delivering the first-ever next generation console sprint car racing games," said Paul Rinde, senior vice president of Infogrames, Inc. - Minneapolis. ‘‘We’re confident gamers will embrace this electrifying form of racing, as well as the incredible realism and feature sets the game will offer."

Sprint cars are easily identified by the big ‘‘wings" on top of each car. The ‘‘wings" keep the powerful cars planted to the racetrack and prevent them from flipping. Combining speeds in excess of 160-mph with dirt surfaces, sprint car racing is known for its spectacular collisions and crashes.

World of Outlaws Sprint Cars 2002 will offer a variety of game modes to choose from. In Career Mode, players can earn virtual prize money and points on their way to the championship. Additionally, players can be approached by sponsors for financial assistance, allowing for the purchase of vehicle upgrades and repairs. Quick race mode allows players to quickly and easily jump into a single event, while practice mode assists the casual gamer in developing their driving skills for the more in-depth and realistic game modes.

Dubbed ‘‘outlaws" in the early years because there were no rules governing when, where or how they raced, World of Outlaws has evolved into one of the largest racing series in the United States. The 2001 season was the 24th for the Pennzoil World of Outlaws series and features 65 events. Over 104 race dates and held in 25 states with a total of $10 million plus in prize money. The booming series ranks second only to NASCAR in terms of popularity, and continues to grow at astonishing rates.

Features Include:

-- Realistic graphics and handling physics powered by Ratbag’s acclaimed Difference Engine;
-- Game modes include, Practice, Career and Quick Race;
-- Multi-player support for two players;
-- Digital and analog controller support;
-- Full use of PlayStation2 DVD capabilities. Historical video, interviews with 24 Outlaws drivers and real race footage;
-- 3D directional sound lets players hear the roar of the crowd as they pass grandstands, as well as the rumbling of the engines from nearby cars;
-- Spectacular collisions, with realistic damage modeling, that affect vehicle performance;
-- Purchase vehicle upgrades and repairs with virtual prize and sponsor money;
-- Awesome effects such as deforming tracks, dynamic lighting/particles;
-- Perform power packed wheel stands;
-- Compete in day and night races;
-- Reactive race commentary builds the drama and excitement.

The Ultimate Next Generation Action Game From the Lead Designer of The Original Tomb Raider Coming This Winter to the Nintendo Gamecube

Interplay Announces the Lead Platform for Galleon: Islands of Mystery, Featuring a New Breed of Action Hero From the Creator of Lara Croft

Interplay Entertainment Corp.announced that their highly anticipated title, Galleon: Islands of Mystery, is currently in development for the Nintendo Gamecube. Set across six unique islands, Galleon: Islands of Mystery introduces a revolutionary new video game hero, Rhama Sabrier, the dashing, fearless captain of the galleon Endeavour. Released under Interplay's Digital Mayhem banner, Galleon is being developed by Confounding Factor, the Bristol based development studio founded by Toby Gard, creator of Lara Croft and lead designer of the original Tomb Raider while previously at Core Design Limited.

''We wanted to beat what was going on in Tomb Raider in every conceivable way," stated Toby Gard, Managing Director of Confounding Factor. ''In Galleon, the characters are more fleshed-out, the animation is fluid and natural, and the puzzles are integrated into an immersive, mesmerizing story."

''Galleon will take full advantage of the Nintendo Gamecube's features and technology," said Digital Mayhem's President, Jim Molitor. ''Toby and his group are creating a spectacular game, both in terms of the visuals and taking the hero based action-adventure genre up several notches."

Set in a timeless age of treacherous sea voyages, eye-popping magic and swashbuckling adventure, Galleon: Islands of Mystery immerses players in a mysterious world alive with invincible warriors and breathtaking battles. As Captain Rhama, players embark on a quest that takes them from the bustling port of Akbah to islands populated with giant monsters, evil slave lords and, of course, damsels in distress in an action-packed adventure of intrigue, magic, love, obsession and revenge. As he races against time, Rhama must locate an ancient artifact capable of unlimited power and unimaginable destruction -- and do all he can to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands!

Galleon's richly crafted story unfolds through hours of action, exploration, challenges and discovery that takes console action-adventure to the next level. Players of all skills will find a rewarding experience as Rhama performs unbelievable moves, like back-flipping off a ledge and landing on a dime, climbing up practically any surface and fighting like a Shao-lin martial arts master. As players progress they will encounter several unique characters who will join the crew, each bringing different skills and advantages. Rhama's greatest advantage will come from the ability to call on the strengths of two female characters who join him. Faith, idealistic and young, is a student of the healing arts and possesses mystical knowledge and powers. Mihoko is a great warrior with unmatched fighting abilities.

Gamers can join in the adventure and experience thrills, chills and harrowing cliffhangers at every turn when Galleon: Islands of Mystery is available this winter, 2001, for the Nintendo Gamecube.

Acclaim Entertainment, Inc. Ships 'XG3 Extreme G Racing' for PlayStation2 Computer Entertainment System

Futuristic Motorcycle Racing Game Combines High-Speeds and Combat, Delivering Next-Generation Arcade Action at 60-Frames-Per-Second

Razor sharp turns faster than the speed of sound will take racing to an extreme new level this fall, as Acclaim Entertainment, Inc. announced that

it has shipped its eagerly anticipated XG3 Extreme G Racing for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. One of the Company's most talked about games at the 2001 E3 show, XG3 Extreme G Racing combines high-speed futuristic motorcycle racing and combat, to deliver incredible next-generation arcade action at 60-frames-per-second. XG3 Extreme G Racing is being supported by an integrated marketing campaign, including print, radio and online adverting, retail promotions and a consumer sweepstakes.

''XG3 is the third installment of our successful franchise, which has sold more than 1.3 million units worldwide," said Evan Stein, Vice President of Brand. ''With its incredibly fast and intuitive gameplay, XG3 is highly regarded among the media and poised to set a new benchmark in the genre."

The media had the following to say about XG3 Extreme G Racing:

''It whips 'Wipeout Fusion's' behind. It kills 'Kinetica' on the quarter mile. We cannot understate the sense of speed you get from playing XG3.'' - Game Informer
''This is one of the most insanely fast racers you'll ever come across. Strap yourselves in -- it's going to be a wild ride.'' - Official PlayStation Magazine

"XG3 definitely has its own particular look and feel going for it, and it may have the genre all to its own on PS2.'' -- www.ps2.ign.com. Developed by Acclaim's Cheltenham Studio, XG3 Extreme G Racing takes players on a gravity-defying race throughout breathtaking, fully animated environments. After climbing onto one of the game's 12 supercharged and fully armed bikes, players are ready to begin the ultimate racing challenge.

XG3 Extreme G Racing offers an array of exciting features, including:
-- Highly-addictive gameplay, that blends high-speed racing and high-stakes combat for an intense arcade experience, appealing to both the casual and hardcore gamer;
-- All-new, advanced game engine, built from the ground up for the next-generation gaming platforms;
-- Constant 60-frames-per-second of heart-pounding action;
-- 10 incredible racing circuits with gut-wrenching loops, twists, spirals and drops;
-- An arsenal of futuristic weapons, enabling the player to obliterate the competition;
-- Turbo boosts taking the bikes to extreme speeds and gravity defying environments;
-- Detailed bike animation system, providing complete feedback controlling the bike's handling, including air-brakes, flaps, weapons and thrusters;
-- A landscape animation system, which brings lush worlds to life;
-- Two-player split-screen racing, which includes Team Grand Prix, Head-to Head and Co-Operative mode, as well as a playable field of up to 12 bikes;
-- In-game music by the world-renowned group Ministry of Sound; Game Play in Dolby Surround Sound;

XG3 Extreme G Racing is currently available for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system at a suggested retail price of $49.99.

Infogrames, Inc. Brings Brute Force Off-Road Racing to PlayStation 2 With Test Drive Off Road - Wide Open

Bigger, Badder Test Drive Off Road Ships to Stores With Licensed Vehicles, Gigantic ‘Go Anywhere’ Environments

Infogrames, Inc. announced that the newest installment in the Test Drive Off-Road series, Test Drive Off-Road -- Wide Open, will hit stores this week for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. Developed by Angel Studios, the game features advanced technology enabling ‘‘go anywhere" environments, 15 licensed off-road vehicles and 30 wide-open tracks in three untamed landscape locations.

‘‘We’ve taken off-road racing and packed it full of unstoppable brute force and power," said Laddie Ervin, director of marketing at Infogrames’ Los Angeles label. ‘‘Test Drive Off-Road -- Wide Open gives gamers the freedom to plow across open terrain at full throttle and freely explore massive real- world locations, rendered in some of the largest environments seen on PlayStation 2, in some of the hottest 4x4s."

Following the Test Drive formula of racing real cars in real locations in an unreal way, Moab, Utah, Yosemite, Calif. and the Big Island of Hawaii set the stage for white knuckle off-road competition. Chosen for their diversity in textures and environments as well as their potential for extreme off-road racing, each of the games’ three locations will contain eight to ten tracks, including circuit courses and A-to-B races with variations in track sizes and styles. Players will have the freedom to choose the path that is best suited to their truck while attempting to complete the course in the fastest time possible.

Test Drive Off-Road -- Wide Open contains a variety of fully customizable licensed off-road vehicles, each offering its own unique handling and abilities. Vehicles include the AM General Humvee, AM General Hummer Wagon, AM General Hummer Open Top, Rod Hall Hummer, Jeep Wrangler, Jeep CJ5, Ford F-150, Ford Bronco, Dodge RAM 2500, Dodge Durango, Dodge T Rex, Shelby S.P. 360, Chevrolet Blazer and the Chevrolet Silverado. Gamers can personalize their rides with paint options and other upgrades, including tires, wheels, light bars, brush guards, lift kits and more. Each vehicle upgrade produces a visual change in the appearance and performance of the vehicle.

Test Drive Off-Road -- Wide Open features a licensed soundtrack including Fear Factory, Unloco, Digital Assassins and the rock-and-roll legends Metallica. The game shipped to most major retail stores this week with an estimated retail price of $49.99 and an ESRB rating of E for everyone.

Infogrames, Inc. Races Its Award-Winning Le Mans Series to Stores With Le Mans 24 Hours for PlayStation 2

Find a comfortable spot on the couch, stock up on food and take the phone off the hook. Infogrames, Inc. is delivering the ultimate 24-hour endurance racing title, Le Mans 24 Hoursfi for PlayStation 2, to stores this week. Feature highlights for the game include real-world racing teams from the 2000 Le Mans race, fully animated pit crews and drivers, a new track from the US Le Mans racing series and advanced artificial intelligence.

‘‘Melbourne House and Infogrames are once again defining the endurance racing genre with Le Mans 24 Hours," said Tom Richardson, director of marketing at Infogrames’ Los Angeles label. ‘‘We’ve built upon the success of Test Drive Le Mans for Dreamcast to perfect and enhance the Le Mans

racing experience for PlayStation 2. The gut wrenching racing physics, life-like pit crews and drivers and authentic lighting and weather effects will blow gamers' minds!"

Capturing the true essence of Le Mans racing with around-the-clock, day-to-night-to-day lighting conditions, Le Mans 24 Hours is the only officially licensed game of the 24 Heures du Mans. The game packs more than 70 licensed vehicles, including 30 new additions from the Le Mans 2000 race. Le Man 24 Hours also adds new teams from Le Mans competition, such as Viper Team Oreca, Corvette Racing and Team Cadillac and boasts 12 real-world tracks, including the US Road Atlanta from the 2000 Le Mans series in the United States.

Le Mans 24 Hours offers five challenging game styles, including the Le Mans 2000 Race mode, which offers players the chance to simulate the 24-Hour Le Mans 2000 competition. Players can also compete in time-compressed 10 minute, 30 minute, one hour or six hour races, or prove their endurance in an actual 24-Hour event. Realistic physics and graphical effects such as dust, smoke, sparks and real-time shadows immerse gamers in the hi-test world of Le Mans racing. With up to 24 cars competing in each race at one time, players can expect the same challenges that real Le Mans drivers face when their tires lose traction and gas and oil levels drop, forcing them to pit their vehicles. While in the pits, players can change tires, re-fuel their vehicle, or they can make repairs. Le Mans 24 Hours offers two-player multiplayer support via split-screen. The game shipped to most major retail stores this week with an estimated retail price of $44.95 and an ESRB rating of E for everyone.

In addition to its recent success with Test Drive Le Mans for Dreamcast, Infogrames' Melbourne House studio also developed the highly regarded Looney Tunes Space Race for Dreamcast.

TDK Mediactive Announces New Gold Date for ''PRYZM Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn"

TDK Mediactive, Inc. announced that ''PRYZM Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn" is now scheduled to ship for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system in March 2002. The action-filled fantasy game features Pryzm, a powerful unicorn, and Karrock, a giant troll, who form a reluctant alliance to drive back an evil plague and heal the inhabitants of their land.

''We are intent on our mission to create quality products," said Vincent Bitetti, chief executive officer of TDK Mediactive. '''PRYZM' is one our first original titles, and one we are deeply committed to. We are rescheduling the release date for the game in order to raise the quality bar for PRYZM and maintain the high standards associated with the TDK name. Digital Illusions, the title's developer, will work closely with us to produce a very competitive and compelling game. The title will ship before the end of our fiscal year."

Patrick Soderlund, CEO of Digital Illusions, added, ''TDK and Digital Illusions are fully committed to creating a lavish fantasy game that reflects both companies' vision for the title." He continued, ''We value our relationship with TDK Mediactive as they understand the nuances of the video game business and we are looking forward to a long and fruitful relationship."

Sega Brings Sonic The Hedgehog and First Online Network Game to Nintendo Gamecube

Sega Makes Video Game History With the Debut of Sonic Adventure 2, Phantasy Star Online and Other Top Games for the Nintendo Gamecube Sega announced that its world famous blue hedgehog, Sonic The Hedgehog, will dash onto the Nintendo Gamecube in a special edition of ‘‘Sonic Adventure 2" (working title). Sega also announced that it plans to release the first online network-playable game available for the Nintendo Gamecube system, ‘‘Phantasy Star Online" (working title). The announcements were made at Nintendo’s Space World event in Tokyo, where Sega will demonstrate eight titles for the Nintendo Gamecube and Game Boy Advance video game systems, marking another milestone in the company’s plan to bring its top-selling content and franchises to all video game platforms.

‘‘Sega is making video game history with the announcement of ‘Sonic Adventure 2’ for Nintendo GameCube," said Peter Moore, president and COO, Sega of America. ‘‘By bringing Sonic to Nintendo’s platforms, Sega is delivering one of the world’s most popular video game properties of all time to an even greater number of gamers worldwide. Continuing Sega’s tradition of innovation, Sega also plans to be the first to deliver online gameplay to Nintendo GameCube with ‘Phantasy Star Online."’

Sonic The Hedgehog has been featured in more than 11 titles for different Sega gaming platforms and has sold upwards of 20 million copies in cumulative units over the past ten years. A leading icon in the video game industry, Sonic has starred in three TV animated series, his own comic book and was the first video game character to appear as a float in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade. Phantasy Star Online, the first online global role playing game (RPG), has attracted more than 300,000 online registrants and been honored with 14 awards worldwide since its launch less than one year ago.

Sega titles demonstrated at ‘‘Nintendo Space World 2001" for the Nintendo Gamecube include ‘‘Sonic Adventure 2" for Nintendo Gamecube (working title), ‘‘Phantasy Star Online" for Nintendo Gamecube (working title), ‘‘Super Monkey Ball" and ‘‘Virtua Striker 3 Ver. 2002" (working title). For the Game Boy Advance, Sega demonstrated ‘‘Sonic Advance" (working title), ‘‘Columns Crown," and ‘‘Puyo Puyo." A title from the ‘‘Sakura Wars" series was demonstrated for the Game Boy hand-held gaming system.

Madden NFL 2002 from Electronic Arts Launches on Four Platforms

For the hardcore football fans, today is the official kickoff of the NFL season, as Electronic Arts ships Madden NFL 2002 for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system and PC. Last week it became available for the PlayStation console and will be available for the N64 on September 11.

In its 12th year, this legendary franchise is looking to continue its dominance on all existing platforms and will be a launch title for the Xbox video game system from Microsoft and the Nintendo GameCube shipping later this fall. Madden NFL 2002 was developed by one of the leading sports game studios in the country, Electronic Arts’ Tiburon Entertainment, and will be available on eight platforms by the end of the year. Each platform

boasts new features such as faster gameplay, new modes, new graphics and deeper emotions.

Last year when Madden NFL 2001 debuted on the PlayStation 2 console, the game looked so realistic that many people confused the videogame gameplay presentation with a television broadcast. This year Madden NFL 2002 is even more life like with all new player face and body technologies. Player faces and body shapes look even more like the NFL counterpart, with over 200 player faces and body models uniquely created for the game.

The animations of all the coaches also feature new face and body technology, as each coach was personally laser scanned and photographed to ensure that they are portrayed on the sideline as realistically as possible. Madden NFL is still the only game where actual coaches can roam the sideline. The Madden producers worked with the NFL coaches such as the Kansas City Chiefs' Dick Vermeil, Oakland Raiders' Jon Gruden, Tampa Bay Buccaneers' Tony Dungy and John Madden himself to incorporate unique strategies for each team.

''We're bringing the gamer on to the field this year in Madden NFL 2002 with all new camera angles going inside the huddle with a helmet cam and featuring extremely deep emotion," said executive producer Steven Chiang. ''Last year was a benchmark for us in terms of what we could do with graphics and technology on the next generation systems. We have learned the extent of the capabilities and now, with all new face and body technology, you're not just playing the game, you are 'in the game."'

Madden NFL 2002 for the PlayStation 2 console also features several new modes including Two-Minute Drill, where points can be earned in a quick-hitting fast-paced game within the game; Create-a Team, featuring customized logos, uniforms, helmets and stadiums; and Training Mode, where the X's and O's of football can be learned from John Madden while perfecting in-game skills. Madden NFL 2002 has a new focus on player and high drama has been added with cool replays featuring camera angles that a TV broadcast can't capture.

Gamers can also play and draft with the newest NFL franchise, the Houston Texans, and can even take them to the Super Bowl in Franchise Mode. Madden Cards are back with new players, new designs and now cheerleaders. These cards are earned by performing certain tasks and they can unlock legendary teams, players, stadiums, and can also boost player ratings. Madden NFL 2002 lets gamers choose to play from hundreds of the greatest NFL players from the past with the inclusion of the All-Madden teams picked since 1984, All-Madden Super Bowl and All-Madden Millennium teams.

With Madden NFL 2002 for the PlayStation and N64, gamers can play in Madden Classic Mode, where the golden days of 16-bit Madden can be relived by playing the gameplay style that brought Madden its fame. Among the enhancements to the current game engine, a new kick meter challenges the user with skill based kicking, you can get a ''do-over" with the new mulligan feature and a defensive mode and head-to-head play have been added to the Two-Minute Drill. Training Mode, featuring instructions in the X's and O's of football from John Madden and cheerleader Madden Cards round out the features for PlayStation and N64.

With an all-new graphics engine that was added to achieve a faster framerate, Madden NFL 2002 for the PC now has real-time lighting effects, time of day changes during the game and 3D sideline players and the chain gang. The new game engine also delivers new physics, smooth animation, multiple collision zones and many other gameplay enhancements to the PC.

With the new and improved online play, gamers will now experience more stable and faster gameplay.

Madden NFL 2002 is rated ‘‘E" (Everyone) by the ESRB and is available on the PlayStation 2, PlayStation, PC and will be available for N64 in September. Suggested retail price of $49.95 on the PlayStation 2.

Game Industry Shoots Down Brain Claims

The video game industry has hit back at claims that computer games can damage children’s brains and insists that the activity can be beneficial.

The European Leisure Software Publishers Association said Wednesday that research carried out at Japan’s Tohoku University was only of "very limited focus."

The software association asserts it is not true that playing video games can make children anti-social and is instead flagging recent British research that suggests that playing computer games can be as beneficial as taking part in physical sporting activity.

"For too long now, our industry has been the target of ill-informed criticism and scare-mongering," Roger Bennett, director general of the association, said in a statement. "We want to help those who weren’t brought up on computer games to understand this exciting new medium and the part that it can play in a healthy balance of learning and leisure activities for all age groups."

Scientists from the Tohoku University said this week that children who spend large amounts of time playing computer games could be causing long-term problems with brain development and might not develop the ability to control their behavior. The researchers claimed that computer games only stimulate those parts of the brain devoted to vision and movement and do not aid the development of other important areas of the brain.

In particular, the researchers fear that video game players are not developing their frontal lobes, which play a crucial role in controlling behavior and in developing memory, emotion and learning.

The researchers also tested children who were carrying out basic arithmetic and found that to be much more beneficial to brain development.

The software association played down the findings.

"The result of this study is actually not that computer games damage the brain, but that half an hour of playing this one particular title was less effective at developing the brain than doing half an hour of repetitive arithmetic," the group said.

"There are many games that involve a variety of skills, reasoning and coordination, while others can be purely educational."

The association is also attempting to dispel the traditional image of the lonely, anti-social game player. It claims that recent British research has discovered that computer games can actually assist physical, mental and social development.

Academics at the University of Central Lancashire and at Manchester University recently found that gamers experience the same high levels of concentration and involvement as athletes do.

"Through the study, gaming emerges as an increasingly social activity, and gamers spend comparable amounts of time socializing with friends and family," the software association said. "The researchers concluded that 'the stereotype of the computer gamer as someone who spends a large amount of leisure time interacting with technology rather than other people is questionable.'"

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!

Atari Jaguar Festival 2001 Report

By Daniel M. Iacovelli

This event is what I would call a big success. My day started out by getting my Jaguar and various Atari Video Club/Jaguar Community United stuff ready for the event. Being that Atari Jaguar Festival was in Wisconsin, it was an easy 2-hour drive for me. So I left my house in Illinois around 8:30 a.m.

I arrived at the location (after passing it up twice) around 9:45 a.m. I met up with Fard Muhammad AKA The Ultimate Atarian, and I finally met up with Randy Femrite at the entrance table (with the sign up sheet I made for him. It was also nice too see people wear tags with the graphic I made for it). I did meet with Dan Loosen and Gary Heil at the Goat Store table. Across from that table was the Classic Gaming Museum exhibit by Marty Goldberg, which was laid out nicely.

Upon entering the main section I saw Terance Williams table with his PC FX system running. Alongside the wall I saw Kevin Moseley's table playing some prot o
Jaguar games. Next to that was Micah Rowe's table also displaying some Jaguar items, including a prototype of Brett hull hockey CD using Songbird's Protector SE cart with the bypass for the Jag CD. Which now brings us to Atari Video Club/ Jaguar Community United table where I met up with Randy's wife Nancy. Randy had a nice layout on his table displaying various Atari Jaguar items including the T-shirt with above-mentioned graphic design on the front and the jaguar ten commandments on the back. He also had displayed Jaguar overlays that somebody else has made. I had enough room to show the fest issue and the Atari Zone PDF collection, as well as the back issue binders of the fanzines, I thought I would have a television and a power strip at my table, but they must have forgot so I couldn't have AVC's tourney as scheduled or even play the Pac-man fever CD. I did manage to set up a mini-Atari tribute table next to the AVC/JCU main table that went over pretty good. Next table was Carl Forhan's Songbird tables where he displayed Protector SE as a game first,

which was pretty cool to see than he later showed the bypass feature for the Jaguar CD (which took about three tries before it got working, reminded me of Fest'99 when Skyhammer didn't work until after 5 tries) using Brett Hull hockey CD. The final table was where Clint Thompson showed off his Jag VR set up and a Demo of OMC games new game being developed. Later on three people from Japan were showing Japanese style Atari items (sort of the Japanese version of my tribute), which was pretty cool. This also the first time that Atari Video Club IL chapter members got together (Me, Clint, Fard, and Ted Rusniak).

Speaking of Firsts, this also marked the first time in history since Battlesphere was produced that a ten-player network was done. Also it was the first time that Jagfest attendance has doubled since its start on July 18,1997 (a record 87 people had attended which is considered good considering that it was being held the same day as Ohio's annual CCAG (Classic Computers and Games) was being held (June 30th, 2001)).

So to sum it up I would say that Jagfest 2001 would be remembered as day of First's: First time it was held in Wisconsin. First time people from overseas attended. The first time a 10-player Battlesphere network was done, and the first time fest attendance passed the forty mark. It was too bad I had cut out early at 7 p.m. (right before they started passing out the prizes) I heard that Fard won the Tempest tourney (which I donated the color issue of the fanzine and a subscription to The Atari Zone), since I had to work on Sunday at 9 a.m.

Over all I would say that Dan L, Gary, Fard and Randy did a good job at this event (I would liked to have helped out but I was busy watching my table). Plans for Fest 2002 are being worked on. For more information of fest 2002 go to http://www.omcgames.com and click on the Jagfest2k2 link. Pictures that me and randy took can be found at AVC's Jagfest site which can be found by going to the official jagfest information site at http://Jagfest.atari.org Here you can also find other reports of Jagfest 2k1 as well as reports on past jagfests.

Next issue I'll have a retrospect of The Atari Jaguar Festivals. It was an article I did for the Jagfest 2001 Program; the only difference is that this will be the complete and uncut version unlike what Dan Loosen had in the program. Until next time, keep on gaming.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Utah Governor Backs Internet Tax Ban

Governors in most states support a continued ban on taxing Internet access provided Congress lets states change the sales tax system to permit the taxation of sales made online, Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt said Monday. Leavitt, speaking on behalf of 42 state and two territorial governors who signed a letter to Congress, said a three-year moratorium on taxing Internet access

should be extended.

A Supreme Court ruling also bans states from forcing out-of-state companies to collect sales tax, depriving states of revenue and putting in-state businesses at a disadvantage.

This should change, Leavitt, a Republican, said.

‘‘The sales tax system is a mess," Leavitt said. ‘‘It needs radical simplification and streamlining."

Colorado Gov. Bill Owens, also a Republican, said no Internet sales should be taxed.

‘‘He is 100 percent at odds with the content of that letter," Owens spokesman Dick Wadhams said.

Taxing Internet sales is a classic example of ‘‘taxation without representation," Wadhams said. States would be able to tax out-of-state companies, while those companies would have no say in the state’s tax laws. Leavitt envisions computer software, provided by the states to businesses, that would automatically calculate and remit sales taxes on Internet sales.

‘‘Every state has different laws," he said. ‘‘It’s very difficult for a retailer to know how much to collect and where to send it," he said.

But before this can happen, the states need to agree on common definitions for goods. To do this, they need Congress’ approval, he said.

Although some support a single sales tax rate for Internet transactions, Leavitt said the software would likely be able to figure out varying rates from different states - provided everyone agrees to common definitions.

‘‘It’s very difficult to bring 50 states together, but if they don’t, they’re going to get nothing," Leavitt said. He estimates that Internet retail sales have sapped as much as $150 million in uncollected sales taxes from Utah.

Leavitt says the money is needed for schools, roads and law enforcement. But Owens disagreed. When a customer visits a store, that customer drives on the state’s roads and enjoys the protection of local police, Wadhams said. When people shop online with an out-of-state merchant, they use none of those local services.

In other states, taxing Internet sales is not much of an issue.

New Hampshire Gov. Jeanne Shaheen, a Democrat, isn’t supporting Leavitt’s letter because her state has no income tax, said spokeswoman Pamela Walsh.

Microsoft Case Gets New Judge; XP Debuts

Microsoft antitrust case was sent to a new judge on Friday to weigh what sanctions to impose on the company, even as the company began releasing the latest version of the Windows software at the center of the legal battle.

A federal appeals court sent the case back to the U.S. District Court, which randomly assigned the case to judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly, appointed

just four years ago by former President Bill Clinton.

Kollar-Kotelly has the task of deciding what remedies are required to prevent any further abuse of Microsoft’s monopoly in personal computer operating systems and whether the company violated the law simply by tying its Internet Explorer browser into the Windows operating system.

The case lands in Kollar-Kotelly’s courtroom at a crucial time for Microsoft. The company on Friday released its new Windows XP operating system to major computer makers, a step toward its widespread retail release planned for Oct. 25. On hand to receive golden disks with the ‘‘gold code," or final version, of Windows XP were representatives from PC manufacturers like Dell Computer Corp. and Hewlett-Packard Co.

Government attorneys are expected to argue before Kollar-Kotelly that Windows XP, packed with new features, is further evidence that Microsoft continues to illegally use its monopoly power.

Out of 10 district court judges that were eligible to take the case, the court’s spokesman said, four had recused themselves from possible selection: Ellen Segal Huvelle, Henry H. Kennedy Jr., Gladys Kessler and Richard Roberts.

Legal analysts said hearings in the case could begin as early as next month.

Born in 1943 and a graduate of Catholic University, Kollar-Kotelly worked as an attorney in the Justice Department’s criminal division between 1969 and 1972.

One Washington D.C. lawyer with a case before Kollar-Kotelly, Daniel McInnis, said the judge is ‘‘smart and capable" and by reputation ‘‘tends to be somewhat pro-government."

‘‘It’s not surprising that people who have worked for the Justice Department are going to be understanding of other Justice Department lawyers once they get on the bench," said McInnis, an antitrust lawyer with the firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld.

However, legal experts caution that it’s difficult to predict how a judge will rule in any particular case. The original trial court judge, for example, Reagan appointee Thomas Penfield Jackson, took an unexpectedly hard line against Microsoft.

The U.S. Court of Appeals in its June 28 opinion agreed with many of Jackson’s conclusions regarding Microsoft’s behavior. But the appeals court removed Jackson from the case, saying the judge had given the ‘‘appearance of partiality," through secret media interviews during the trial.

Jackson’s order that Microsoft should be split in two to prevent future antitrust violations was reversed by the appeals court.

Microsoft, citing Jackson’s conduct, has asked the Supreme Court to reverse the appeals court ruling that the company abused its Windows monopoly.

FTC Commissioner Says Web Privacy Law Unlikely

The Federal Trade Commission is unlikely to propose Internet privacy legislation and Congress will not pass any this year, as both fear botching the attempt to regulate the Web, a commissioner said Monday.

‘‘My personal opinion is that the FTC will not be making a proposal that Congress enact legislation" on privacy, Commissioner Orson Swindle told Reuters on the sidelines of a new economy conference organized by the Progress & Freedom Foundation.

‘‘Secondly, I don’t think Congress will move to legislate, because I don’t think you could get a consensus to do it."

The technology industry is divided on whether the government should step in with standards to protect frustrated consumers or leave the issue to the industry, which could act more flexibly in the face of rapidly changing technology.

Swindle opposed an FTC proposal to safeguard consumers with privacy legislation made under the previous chairman of the regulator. The new chairman, Timothy Muris, would come out with his position on the issue soon, Swindle said.

‘‘I think you can expect him to pursue a very positive, pro-privacy agenda using existing laws to get it done. That’s my speculation," Swindle said.

‘‘The debate has made legislators and regulators more aware of the complexity of the issue, the enormous threat of unintended consequences," Swindle said.

More and more web sites posted privacy policy. Many were couched in ‘‘absurd" legal language and tough to find, Swindle said, but the industry was responding and had a good incentive: "Happy consumers mean long-successful businesses," he said.

Consumers Distrust AOL More Than Microsoft

Consumers are more distrustful of AOL Time Warner Inc. than rival Microsoft Corp., which has been the target of competitive concerns for years, according to a Gartner Inc. survey of adult online users released on Thursday.

AOL, which prides itself on consumer privacy and security issues, is the least trusted company on the Web when compared with online services from banks, brokerages, credit card companies, online retailer Amazon.com Inc., large retailers and Microsoft, the survey found.

About 37 percent of online consumers said they had a high level of distrust of AOL Time Warner’s AOL Internet unit, compared with 29 percent who said they were highly distrustful of Microsoft. About 21 percent were distrustful of banks and thrifts as part of the survey.

The survey also found that 17 percent of the consumers said they had high levels of trust in Microsoft while 15 percent said the same about AOL. Meanwhile, 33 percent had high levels of trust in banks and thrifts.

Those surveyed were answering a question about how much they trusted

online providers with their personal and financial information.

Gartner Research Director Avivah Litan said in a phone interview that the report was done by surveying 2,150 consumers in hopes of gauging attitudes toward using the Internet for shopping and other transactions. The research was not vendor-sponsored, she added.

The survey also hoped to find what features needed to be in place to ease concerns and who consumers trust most to deal with personal and financial information.

‘‘It directly contradicts everything we are hearing from our members," said AOL spokesman Andrew Weinstein. ‘‘Consumers have a wide choice in online service and we added more than six million members in the last year alone. We survey our members all the time and satisfaction has never been higher"

Since the closing of AOL’s $106.2 billion purchase of Time Warner Inc. in January, the Internet and media giant has experienced some of the backlash that software giant Microsoft has endured because of its size, reach and power. The findings come amid Microsoft’s aggressive battle to take away market share from the world’s largest Internet services provider and as Microsoft tries to bulk up its Internet presence and services.

‘‘The added trust that consumers have in Microsoft gives the company an important leg up in its battle with AOL for online services. Consumers will be more likely to try new Microsoft features embedded in Windows XP, such as Microsoft Messaging," said Litan. ‘‘AOL has always viewed itself as the ’consumer’s advocate’ but this survey clearly dispels that myth."

Microsoft also received higher consumer satisfaction ratings than AOL on its Internet and e-mail services, the survey found.

Gartner also asked consumers about Microsoft’s Passport service, which lets consumers sign on to Web sites and services with just one user ID and password and which has raised the ire of some privacy advocates.

Out of those who did use Passport services, Litan said about 83 percent did not feel comfortable enough providing their credit card numbers.

More than 70 percent of those surveyed had not signed up for the Passport service and said they were highly unlikely to do so in the next six months.

Apple Releases Mac OS 9.2.1

Apple today released an update to Mac OS 9 -- version 9.2.1. The software is available from a link from Apple’s Hot News Web page.

"Mac OS 9.2.1 Update improves Classic application compatibility in Mac OS X and additional hardware support for Macs capable of running Mac OS X," said Apple. The 9.2.1 update requires users to have Mac OS 9.1 installed if they are performing an automatic or manual update. Apple said that the new operating system can be installed on Mac OS X-compatible computers, including the Power Mac G3, Power Mac G4, PowerBook G3 (except for the original PowerBook G3), PowerBook G4, iMac and iBook.

Separate versions of the 9.2.1 installer have been created for North

American and International English markets; French, German, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, and Japanese language versions are also supported. The update is available either as a single installer or as a multi-part download. The size of the upgrade depends on the localized language version being downloaded; it ranges from 82MB to 103.5MB.

Iomega Trying to Revive Zip Drives

Iomega Corp. chief executive Werner Heid knows how the razor blade principle of business works: give away the razors and customers will have to buy the blades.

As a vice president for Hewlett-Packard Co., he learned that the theory works in the world of computers. Sell enough printers at rock-bottom prices, and consumers will make up the difference by buying ink cartridges at $27 a pop.

Now he’s trying to revive Iomega’s flagging sales by applying the concept to the company’s mainstay products. Move enough Zip drives, he figures, and maybe customers will buy enough Zip disks to buoy up Iomega’s bottom line.

Problem is, it’s unclear if there’s room for growth in magnetic storage devices. Rewritable compact discs are getting cheaper every day and rewritable DVD’s are around the corner.

Iomega is pressing forward nonetheless, putting money into marketing even as the company is laying off 1,250 of its 3,300 employees in an effort to slash costs. The company lost nearly $36 million in the second quarter of 2001.

Heid took the CEO’s job in June, replacing Bruce Albertson, who resigned over differences with the board. He is paring down Iomega’s product lines, temporarily abandoning efforts to push trendy retail products that Albertson had championed such as the audio player HipZip and picture storage system FotoShow.

Instead, Iomega is reaching out to current Zip users (it estimates 42 million drives are currently in use), producing new software that will encourage them to use more storage space. The company is also targeting new customers by cutting prices on Zip drives, which accounted for nearly 79 percent of its revenue in the latest quarter.

Heid said Iomega may soon sell its 100-megabyte drive, now $85 on the company Web site, for about $50 at Target or Wal-Mart. The drives would come with Iomega’s ActiveDisk software, which lets users run applications directly off their Zip drives, bypassing the need for a hard drive.

‘‘If you have small kids at home who are constantly hammering the computer but want to play their own games, the kids would basically plug their disks in and can play without ever touching your hard drive," said Heid. ‘‘There’s something I’m sure many people can relate to."

But the strategy may be a case of too little too late, said Stan Corker, director of technology research for Emerald Research. He said Iomega was focused on a similar proposal in the late 1990s, when it set out to replace the floppy disk with the Zip.

Iomega had seen enormous growth, with sales surging more than tenfold between 1994 and 1997, but Zip prices were too high to persuade computer makers to include the device in their PCs, Corker said.

‘‘Since then, the Zip has been in a downward cycle," he said. ‘‘A lot of comments coming out of Iomega management these days are associated with rejuvenating the Zip product line, but I feel that it’s probably far too late because rewritable CDs have come along in the meantime."

Other problems plagued Iomega during that period as well. The company went through three CEOs in 18 months, racked up millions of dollars in losses, cut jobs and closed two California plants.

In 1998, the company settled a lawsuit from consumers who said they were overcharged because of delays on its help lines. The year before, it recalled some Jaz storage disks.

Most notably, Zip customers began to complain about the so-called ‘‘click of death." Users who heard the sound soon found their drives and their data wiped out. Last year, the company settled a class-action lawsuit, agreeing to give $40 rebates to millions of customers who bought Zips between 1995 and March of this year.

Iomega said that glitch has been fixed and is pushing hard to market Zip as more reliable than rewritable CDs, including quirky television spots feature a backyard swimmer who is eaten by an octopus, then reappears thanks to a Zip drive.

Print ads say: ‘‘If you think CD-RW is the safest, easiest way to store files, you don’t know zip."

‘‘CD-RWs are much more unreliable when it comes to storing data and then reading it again," Heid said. ‘‘If you get a scratch on your CD, you hear the music skipping. In the music environment, that’s an annoyance and you can live with it. In the computer environment, you’ve lost your file."

Nevertheless, even while Heid disparages CDs, Iomega says it’s launching CD-burner software.

The company also retails Phillips rewritable CD drives and is one of the top CD sellers in the market.

Heid says Iomega also plans to closely watch development of rewritable DVDs, which are now too expensive for most home users.

Yet he says Iomega’s main thrust must remain the Zip, which may expand beyond the current 250 megabytes of storage, and the new Peerless drive, which can store up to 20 gigabytes.

Heid says he’s confident that strategy means Iomega will be profitable throughout fiscal year 2002.

Laptops Take Great Leap Frward

For years, PC makers have predicted that notebooks would replace desktops in the computing world. Now it’s beginning to happen, according to researcher IDC. For years, PC makers have predicted that notebooks would replace

desktops in the computing world. Now it’s beginning to happen, according to researcher IDC. Notebooks had long accounted for less than 20 percent of the worldwide PC sales mix. But notebooks broke the 20 percent mark last year and over the last several quarters have crept up to nearly 24 percent, according to IDC.

This is the beginning of a trend that will push notebooks to 25 percent or more of the market in the next several years, the firm says.

"Notebooks accounted for nearly 24 percent of the (second-quarter PC) mix, which is up from both the quarter before and the same period last year," said IDC analyst Alan Promisel. "It’s a pretty significant uptick."

An upswing in notebooks benefits PC makers. Battered by low demand, declining profits and cutthroat desktop pricing, many manufacturers are putting more emphasis on notebooks, which can deliver higher profits.

Design also plays a larger part in the notebook market. Some customers want basic laptops, while others opt for fancier thin-and-light models. This spectrum of style gives manufactures an opportunity to differentiate.

"Generally, I think the trend will continue," Promisel said. "Our forecast is that by 2005, notebooks are going to be about 25 percent of the desktop/notebook split."

In 1999, the mix was 18 percent notebooks, 82 percent desktops. In 2000, notebooks grew to 20 percent worldwide. By the second quarter of this year, notebooks were up to 23.2 percent of the market.

IDC believes the upward trend is unstoppable. The research company is likely to increase its 2005 estimate--that notebooks will account for 25 percent of the PC market then--when it prepares its next report, Promisel said.

Price and productivity gains are the two main factors pushing notebooks forward. As a result, long-held theories that notebooks would proliferate with falling prices seem to be coming true.

"I think there’s been a lot of traction on lower price points...and also wireless demand and realizations of productivity of mobility," Promisel said. "People are finally realizing...the benefits of mobile computing.

"I think pushing down below the $1,000 price barrier for the consumer segment...has helped sales," he added.

Most entry-level notebooks in the second quarter combined a $999 price tag with relatively beefy features such as 64MB of memory and a 6GB-10GB hard drive. Previously, notebooks priced below $1,000 had half the memory and hard drive storage and less-advanced displays.

"You’re getting a feature set that’s pretty much equivalent to an entry-level desktop," Promisel said.

While several factors have contributed to the notebook upswing, price has been the largest element. Thanks to the overall lower cost of components in the quarter, namely the lower cost of flat-panel displays and memory, manufacturers have been able to lower overall prices on entry-level notebooks while packing more features into higher-end

models. New uses for notebooks, including wireless LANs (local area networks), have also boosted usability for the machines.

Dell Computer, for example, saw an increase in notebook shipments during the second quarter, according to its earnings release issued Thursday. Notebook shipments were up 22 percent for the quarter, the company said.

That trend should continue, especially in home and education markets, Dell executives said.

"On the home market and education especially, we're seeing a pretty strong uptick in the mix" to more than 23 percent, said Tim Peters, vice president of Dell's Transactional Computing and Products Group.

Meanwhile, on the corporate side, Dell sees the desktop/notebook mix as basically flat at the moment, due to a slow economy. However, Peters said he expects corporate notebook sales will pick up starting next year, assuming the economic situation improves.

Dell now has the No. 1 spot in notebook market share, according to IDC. Hewlett-Packard made similar statements about notebook sales in its second-quarter earnings report, saying revenue for portables was up 5 percent for the quarter, while overall computing systems revenue dropped by 22 percent. The introduction of wireless networking to notebook PCs is helping to boost sales, according to IDC.

Adding 802.11b wireless LAN to a notebook, for example, allows notebook users to move around a home or an office and maintain a connection to the Internet without being tethered to a cable.

Many notebook makers, such as IBM and Dell, are pre-installing antennas that allow people to take advantage of 802.11b by purchasing an add-in radio card for their notebook. Apple Computer was one of the first to integrate 802.11 support into its portables, beginning in 1999.

As notebooks gain in popularity, chipmakers are competing more aggressively to deliver processors fine-tuned for mobile use.

Intel, which has been selling lower-power versions of its desktop chips to notebook makers for years, recently added features such as its SpeedStep, aimed specifically at increasing performance and lowering power consumption for notebook chips.

The PC chip leader is also developing a new chip, code-named Banias, with a number of new tricks that aim to decrease power consumption while keeping performance up.

Though prices have fallen, notebooks will continue to command a price premium over desktops, due to several factors.

They include screens and other unique components as well as research and development costs. Though flat panels have fallen dramatically in price, they continue to be the most expensive component in a notebook.

Meanwhile, chipmakers charge a premium on mobile processors and graphics chips, which are designed to be smaller and more power-efficient. Notebook research and development also costs more than that for desktops, due to the larger amount of proprietary hardware that goes into notebooks and the tighter confines inside the machines' chassis.

"Desktops are always going to be priced lower," Promisel said. "But that’s the price you pay for going mobile."

Jobs: No New Hardware at Apple Expo 2001

It’s been suspected that Apple CEO Steve Jobs would give the opening keynote address at next month’s Apple Expo 2001 in Paris, and today Apple confirmed the news. In unusually frank statement, Jobs explained what he’ll be focusing on during his time on stage and said his company will make no new hardware announcements.

"My keynote will focus on Mac OS X v10.1, the super-fast new version of Mac OS X, and our revolutionary new iDVD 2 software, which lets users create their own custom DVDs that can be played on consumer DVD players," Jobs said. "This has been an incredible new product year for Apple, so we don’t plan to launch any new hardware products in Paris this year."

What makes today’s statement from Apple extraordinary is that the focus of Jobs’ keynote presentations is usually a closely guarded secret -- rumor sites and discussion boards typically run rampant with commentary about what Apple is expected to unveil weeks before major shows. Apparently, Apple is trying to prevent inflated expectations for the event.

Apple Expo 2001 will be held at the Paris Expo in Porte de Versailles, Sept. 26-30. The event’s keynote address is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 26 at 9:00 a.m. (CET) in the Palais de Congres.

Building A Unified Anti-Spam Front

Maybe you don’t want to chat live with enticing women, or learn more about herbal cancer cures, or even get out of debt scot-free. Maybe you want to nuke all the spam. There’s a new nonprofit called the SpamCon Foundation in San Francisco that promises to help IT managers and individuals come up with a well-organized battle plan to combat the spread of spam.

SpamCon’s site holds such resources as current state laws, court cases, and precedents as well as a library of statistics, studies, and white papers to help managers develop anti-spam policies. It hosts discussion groups and a searchable database of more than 7,000 relevant articles, too.

Tom Geller, a longtime activist in the effort to eradicate spam, founded the outfit after an anti-spam conference in April. Says Geller, "Spam has grown partly because users, network administrators, and responsible marketers have fought it in different ways, even when their ultimate goals are the same."

Computer Experts Say ’Good Worm’ Is Bad Idea

A new ‘‘worm" software program that purports to rid computers of malicious

viruses actually leaves the viruses intact and chews up files instead, security experts said on Friday.

The worm, dubbed Win32.All3gro.A, is only posing as a ‘‘good worm," the experts said, highlighting the dangers of a new fad for creating self-propagating applications to delete malicious programs that resurfaced after the Code Red II worm scare early this month. Code Red II installs a ‘‘back door," leaving computers vulnerable to hacking.

While it sounds like an attractive concept, the ‘‘good worm" notion is actually a bad idea, experts concurred.

‘‘Even if it’s with good intent, it’s not a good idea," said Vincent Weafer, director of Symantec Corp.’s antivirus research center. ‘‘It could have unexpected results. And there’s no centralized control to update it."

‘‘It’s not a responsible approach," said Russ Cooper, surgeon general of TruSecure Corp.

‘‘How do you know it’s only going to do good things?" Cooper said. ‘‘How do you prevent it from clogging the network and affecting uninfected computers? How do you prevent people from modifying it into a malicious worm?"

Worms, programs that spread themselves from one computer to another, were initially created to perform helpful tasks before they became a way for malicious hackers to spread viruses, with the first reported worm in 1971 designed to aid air traffic controllers.

Xerox Corp.’s Palo Alto Research Center experimented further in the 1980s, designing worms to do things like clean up printer queues, Weafer said. After one of the worms malfunctioned and ‘‘went out of control," researchers developed a ‘‘vaccine," the first antivirus software, he said.

Weafer is convinced that Win32.All3gro.A is a malicious worm merely posing as an antivirus program.

The worm doesn’t completely remove the viruses it claims to eradicate -- the highly infectious and malicious SirCam, Badtrans and PrettyPark -- and depending on the day of the week it tries to delete documents or system files, while emailing itself to recipients on a computer’s address book, he said.

‘‘It is a malicious attempt with social engineering to try to fool people into downloading it," Weafer said.

It’s fairly common for virus writers to take advantage of security holes left by other viruses or malicious applications, he said.

For example, the Leaves worm in June looked for computers infected with the System SubSeven Trojan, a ‘‘back door program," closed the hole but then created a new one for itself, according to Weafer.

In May researchers detected a relatively nondestructive worm that masqueraded as an antivirus warning from Symantec.

Researchers don’t know the origin of Win32.All3gro.A, but Weafer said it was first discussed in a magazine article in Korea. ‘‘We’ve seen very little of this (worm) out in the wild," so it is a low threat, he added.

The worm arrives with a subject line that says ‘‘New antivirus tool" and an attachment labeled ‘‘Antivirus.exe." Symantec’s antivirus software will protect computers from the worm, Weafer said.

Will the Internet Ever Be Safe from Viruses?

The latest computer viruses, Code Red and Code Red II, stormed through a quarter of a million computers in the first nine hours they were unleashed on the Internet, and the cost of repairing the collateral damage they have caused stands at US$2 billion and counting. SirCam, the Love Bug and Anna Kournikova, to name just a few of the nastier ones, have all wormed their destructive way through the Internet in the past few months, causing financial loss, inconvenience and frustration, as well as worry and anger.

The seemingly inexorable proliferation of online viruses -- and the apparent inability in many cases to blunt their initial effectiveness -- lead to a simple question: Will the Internet ever be safe? Analysts reply: Probably not.

"The Internet will never be completely safe," CIBC World Markets security research analyst John Schneller told NewsFactor Network. "There will always be vulnerabilities associated with the Internet."

As long as the Internet remains an open system to which virtually anyone has access, analysts say, there will always be insurmountable security vulnerabilities.

"I don’t believe there are more bad guys than good guys out there," IDC security analyst Charles Kolodgy told NewsFactor.

"The problem, as always with security, is that you have to lock every door and every window," Kolodgy added, "whereas the bad guy only has to find the one you didn’t lock. It’s so complicated and difficult to secure everything."

As the Internet has evolved, so have viruses. Once, computer viruses were passed along only through shared diskettes. Now, the Internet brings them straight to your e-mail inbox.

Experts once believed that a user had to open an infected e-mail to catch a virus, but that is no longer true. Most people now know enough not to open an e-mail from an unknown sender that has an attachment. They also know that many e-mail warnings about viruses from unknown sources are either hoaxes or viruses themselves.

Also, with the growth of the Internet, the primary virus entry point is shifting from the desktop to the server.

Experts say that anti-virus software is a must and should be updated weekly in order to combat the newest viruses. Those with broadband connections, who are exposed to greater danger simply because high-speed "always-on" connections give viruses wider windows of opportunity, should have personal firewalls as well.

Analysts say the very complexity of the Internet has helped guard it

against a truly cataclysmic event, what is known in the anti-virus community as a "Chernobyl" event.

"The SirCam virus didn’t seem to do the corporate damage to enterprises and networks, that Melissa and Love Bug did," Kolodgy told NewsFactor.

"And that [SirCam] virus is really nasty, just technologically head-and-shoulders above Melissa and Love Bug. Yet the damage wasn’t as great because a lot more anti-virus techniques, policies and products have been deployed. The systems intended to watch out for these things have been better."

Indeed, anti-virus software has boomed and will continue to boom. Worldwide revenue in 2000 for anti-virus software was $1.4 billion, a 25 percent growth over 1999, according to IDC.

With that much at stake, some critics ask whether security companies have the financial incentive to rid the Web of every bug and virus.

"At the end of the day, if you could find a security company that could build a business model that would completely secure the Internet, they would do it," Schneller said.

"Such technologies don’t exist and probably never will," Schneller said. "The Internet will never be completely secure."

"But that said," Schneller added, "I think it will be secure enough for the average human being to feel comfortable enough to place himself out there transacting business, e-commerce and information exchange."

Kolodgy agreed.

"We need not fear," he said. "I think there’s more good than bad on the Internet."

Motorola Moots Semicon Products Sector Sell-off

Motorola has threatened to sell off its semiconductor unit - the division behind the PowerPC and Palm’s Dragonball CPU - if the financially troubled operating can’t turn itself around.

"No segment of the company is sacred in terms of being protected from its obligation to contribute to that level of financial return," Motorola investor relations chief Ed Gams told analysts this week. "There are no sacred cows here."

"The present level of financial performance of the segment cannot be tolerated," he added. "Improvements are expected."

And Motorola president Robert Growney said that a deadline has been set by which the company’s chip division, the Semiconductor Products Sector, must show that it can start sufficiently contributing to the company’s bottom line. Growney would not say how long the SPS has.

With its focus on embedded applications, particularly communications and networking products, SPS has been hit hard by the downturn in the global chip market. Sales of PowerPC chips for desktop computers, almost all of

them to Apple, and Dragonball CPUs to Palm and its licensees have dipped too.

The SPS posted a $131 million operating loss in the first quarter, followed by a $381 million operating loss in Q2. However, a cost-cutting programme, including plant closures and job losses, has brought the division to break-even. Right now, it's praying for an upturn in the market to counter the significant drop on demand experienced during the first six months of the year. Even then, 2001 will see an overall decline of 15-20 per cent, the SPS reckons.

Apple may be doing less badly than other PC vendors, while Palm appears to be picking up, but even together they add up to a small percentage of Motorola's embedded sales.

But how serious is Growney's threat? Certainly, in the past, he has called the SPS a core Motorola business, and therefore safe from sale. That might suggest that his latest comments are as much about reassuring Wall Street that the company will take extreme measures to improve its financial position if it has to. It might also act as a verbal kick up the arse for senior SPS staffers.

Another option open to Motorola is to spin off the SPS, as Siemens did with Infineon, but the tone of Growney's latest and previous comments suggests as IPO isn't a choice the company is likely to pursue.

One other possibility presents itself, however. Motorola could indeed be selling off the chip business - or at least part of it. As we've reported before, Apple is believed to have the right to buy Motorola's PowerPC assets. Unsatisified with Motorola's progress in getting the PowerPC to compete more effectively with the x86 world, Apple has been putting more and more development effort into making the platform better suited to its own needs. The logical upshot of that - combined with Motorola's greater interest in the embedded market - would be to transfer PowerPC in its entirety to Apple.

Growney's comments can be read to pave the way for such a sale, which can now be presented as a streamlining of the SPS' business and as a money-making exercise both leading to profitability. At the same time, it allows Motorola to retain control over a core business: the development of chips for communcations markets.

Of course, Apple may not want to take on the PowerPC because it ties it to the platform more tightly than it is now, particularly now it has launched the potentially multi-platform Mac OS X. However, acquiring PowerPC from Motorola would put Apple in charge of its own destiny, and send a big message out to the world that it's support for the platform is undiminished.

In any case, it could buy the platform with its other PowerPC partner, IBM, set it up as a jointly-owned subsidiary, which would leave it room to manoeuvre later on should a change of platform ever become necessary.

So far, there's little to suggest an Apple takeover, but hints from one source claiming to be an Apple staffer. However, the plot's various strands do appear to be coming together, enough at least, to warrant a close watch over the coming months. Any Apple, IBM or Motorola staffers who know more can tell us all about it here.

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